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Authority 8012955

By SW NARA Date 7/9/02

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PEKING 031

August 19, 1973

To: Dr. Kissinger

From: David Bruce

1. Although the climate of our bilateral relations seems to be somewhat cooler in recent weeks, the Chinese remain courteous in our dealings here, and obviously want to proceed toward further normalization of our relationship.

2. That being the case, it seems to me that the Chinese would want your visit timed so that it in their judgement, would be mutually beneficial.

3. Sihanouk arrived Peking from Pyongyang via Tientsin on August 17. It is conceivable that Chinese message to you awaited his return and is based on talks with him.

4. It is also possible that timing of Chinese message was related to decisions taken at high level meetings which we believe have been going on at the Great Hall for several days. There have been evidences in editorials recently of a struggle over which of "the two lines" is to be taken, and the premier may have needed at least a partial resolution of that before taking his next visible step with the United States.

5. It may be, of course, that neither of these possibilities has basis in fact, but I think it likely that one or both could explain the timing. In any event, I believe the Chinese would try to time your visit with serious reasons in mind and would not play games with you through delayed responses out of pettiness. As you know better than any one, the Premier is not usually small-minded. Incidentally he must recently have been under exceptional stress because of determined attacks made on him and his politics during this period of party and factional meetings. We suppose that the dates now specified have been set in the light of the shifting requirements of the party congress and already fixed arrangements to receive other distinguished statesmen in September and October.

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-2-

6. We still do not know when the party congress may convene: indeed it may be already in session.

7. From the standpoint of keeping the U. S.-PRC relationship in the best possible light, I am convinced it would be desirable to have your visit come sooner rather than later. Perhaps as a reflection of the deliberations going on in the Great Hall, we have been getting some fairly rough press treatment on Cambodia and Korea, and your visit would certainly tend to offset this. In my opinion, given what we estimate to be the magnitude of present Chinese domestic and international concerns, the Chinese may well be going to considerable lengths to accomodate you with the September date.

8. Warm Regards.